

# ITALIAN UFO REPORTER

Newsletter of the Italian Center for UFO Studies

C.I.S.U. - Corso Vittorio Emanuele 108 - 10121 Torino - Italia

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ITUFOR-5 is mainly consisting of the English language abstracts of C.I.S.U. "UFO Information Review" ("UFO - RIVISTA DI INFORMAZIONE UFOLOGICA") No. 3, June 1987.

We can't but apologize for the strong delay in releasing this issue of ITUFOR: the accompanying issue of "UFO" was regularly on schedule in June, but we remained overloaded with work until more recently and so were not able to prepare the English "Reporter".

As always, wide summaries are given of the articles, since we guess that our readers who can't read Italian won't probably go further than reading ITUFOR, so it must be as complete as possible. Anyway, please have a glance at "UFO" at least for references and illustrations, since they are not reproduced here.

Only three articles have got a shorter treatment: those by Hilary Evans and by Anders Liljegren since they were originally published in English and so need no summary here; and the one by Edoardo Russo because it's not about Italian matters, but a UFO congress in France.

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SUNSET AND UFOs  
by Enrico Bernieri

Dr. Bernieri has got a Ph.D. in physics and is presently working as a researcher for the Italian National Institute for Nuclear Physics. He is specially interested in quantitative ufology and is a founding member of C.I.S.U.

## THE PILOT STUDY

In 1979 two regional samples of UFO reports were analyzed according to a time/month distribution: a catalogue of 128 reports of years 1977-78 in Emilia-Romagna, and 67 reports from Campania. The average time of UFO sightings was calculated for each month of the year (summer standard time converted in local solar sun time), and it was compared to the monthly average time of sunset, which was different for each region because of different latitudes).

A clear pattern emerged in both cases, showing that UFOs and sunset were clearly correlated: UFO sightings average time seemed to follow sunset with a nearly constant delay (98 minutes in Campania, 126 minutes in Emilia).

## LARGER SAMPLES

This pilot study was confirmed in 1984 when a larger regional sample of reports became available: Edoardo Russo's catalogue of nearly 1,000 sightings in Piemonte (499 of them showing exact time). The same pattern was found: UFO average time followed sunset each month with an average delay of 200 minutes). Statistical verification (chi-square

test) was also positive that such correlation was significant. A second analysis was performed in 1987 on 424 reports (from Marco Bottaini's 985 cases regional catalogue of Toscana): the average delay was 143 minutes, that is it was always shorter as the region laid more southern.

### EVALUATION

No sure explanation can be offered of the pattern, which is interesting because it concerns a physical, "external" (environmental) parameter like sunset time, and - more important - because it is constant even if the samples contain unselected reports (IFOs and UFOs as well).

A combined physical/sociological hypothesis is suggested: if the greater part of reported phenomena are bright objects in the sky, their visibility depends upon contrast between their light and the background; such contrast is increasing after sunset up to a "saturation" point (night sky) at a given delay after sunset. Moreover the number of would-be witnesses is high around sunset and decreasing in the following hours with a minimum in the night times. The combined effect of these two causes might perhaps explain the described pattern. Deeper studies are to be done on the matter.

### FOREIGN STUDIES

Enrico Bernieri's article is followed by an editorial detailed survey (by Edoardo Russo, though unsigned) of similar independent studies abroad. In 1975-1976 Michel Monnerie used two samples of French reports (150 from 1969 and 480 from 1973) showing that sightings number was greater when neither sun nor moon were visible and that hours of greater UFO concentration "moved" with sunset/dawn time as seasons changed. A larger sample of world reports was analyzed by a S.O.B.E.P.S. team in Belgium in 1978-79, and here too the sunset pattern emerged as well as the monthly "migration"; but they also discovered that such migration followed opposite directions in the northern vs. southern hemisphere and that delay on sunset time was dependent on latitude, so demonstrating the correlation between UFO sighting maximum time and sun elevation under horizon: it followed that all worldwide time statistics are meaningless, as well as time laws which do not consider season's effect. Such conclusion was criticized by French official group G.E.P.A.N., which noticed an unscreened sample of IFOs and UFOs together would exactly give such a result (weather-balloons and Venus are typical sunset sightings). It should be noted that back in 1955 Blue Book Special Report No.14 had already discovered examined the sunset/dawn and even analyzed it under the modern "IFO vs. UFO" angle.

### USE OF STATISTICS

An editorial unsigned "box" (by Gian Paolo Grassino) is included in the article warning against a naive use of UFO statistics, which often doesn't consider reliability of data, non-homogeneity of samples and error margins: consequently correlations found may be meaningless. Reason for errors is due to imperfect instrument (human witness) which produces both random and systematic errors. Moreover, samples include a majority of IFOs, a minority of UFOs and a large number of reports with insufficient data. A great caution should then be adopted when using and evaluating UFO statistics.

**EFFECTS ON THE VEGETATION**  
**Close Encounter of the Second Kind at Vallenoncello**  
**by Antonio Chiumiento**

At 10.15 p.m. on August 2nd, 1978 the watcher (aged 36) of a villa in VALLENONCELLO (province of Pordenone) had just left his two dogs free in the villa park for the night when he heard them barking and turned back to see a bright oval object hovering above tree-tops, 200 meters away. The white-bluish light was at a height of about 15 meters above the ground, its dimensions were about 8 meters long and 4-5 meters tall. After about 10 seconds it began descending vertically behind the tree line, gradually enhancing its luminosity: it was illuminating the surrounding ground and emitted a lateral rotating beam of light which grew brighter and brighter as it got nearer to the ground. When it was at a height of 3 meters, the man fled into the house, while the dogs barked louder and louder, then began howling and after two minutes got back to the front of the house, where they laid down silent. No noise was heard in the minutes and half of the sighting, except a kind of air shuffle when the light began descending.

On the following morning the man went on the spot and there he found a "burned trace", 2 meters in diameter, of irregular shape, where the grass had changed into a reddish color and was covered by a dark, brownish jelly-like substance, which he and the gardener collected samples of; but since they didn't know what to do with the samples, he threw them away as soon as they became dried up. The substance remained on the ground for several months, and vegetation only began growing two years later. When the event came to our attention and an investigation took place, in 1981, the area was still visible and covered with moss and little cactus-like plants scattered around and very different from the typical vegetation on spot. Samples were taken of the ground both inside and outside the trace and were analyzed by the Regional Center of Agricultural Experimentation, which only found some chemical elements were present inside which were not outside, though in very small proportions, especially calcium, whose presence couldn't be attributed to manuring.

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**THE FRONTIERS OF UFOLOGY**  
**Notes for an interdisciplinary Approach**  
**by Hilary Evans**

(Translated from the "BUFORA Bulletin" No. 17, May 1985.)

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**UFOs AND ADVERTISING**  
**The UFO Image as a Vehicle for Commercials**  
**by Paolo Toselli**

The UFO image takes a part in the re-discovery of fantastic as a reaction to positivism, and UFOs appear in the mass media as well as in the sky: cinema, TV, popular books, comics and advertising. Public interest in UFOs/ET was indeed recognized by economic forces before than by intellectuals.

The first Italian examples of UFO images in commercial advertising took place back in the '60s, when "Alfa Romeo" christianized "Flying Saucer" one of its sport motorcars, and "Agnesi" did the same for a round kind of "pasta".

## CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND

Now several firms all around the world use the word "UFO" as a logo for sportswear, lamps, software, sun-glasses, bubble-gum and so on, but it all can be traced back to Spielberg's successful movie, "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", which heavily influenced commercial advertising in Italy, in two different directions: direct reference to the term "close encounter" (which sums well the coming closer and confronting, and so was good for cosmetic products); and certain images: the lone road ahead, of course, but also UFO-like spaceships, lights from upwards down onto the folk, "haunted" houses, etc.

### A YOGURT FOR E.T.

The best example is the recent TV spot of "Danone" yogurt: an old man and a motorist are blinded by a light beam from upwards, a voice tells "by millions from everywhere they come", groups of enthusiastical people looks up at bright flying objects which turn themselves into wide strawberries plunging into a giant yogurt.

A similar scene was also used by "Fiat" for their newest "Croma" car ("planet car"): a bright light outside the house calls a family's attention, they get out and see a giant spaceship passing above: as it's gone, a new car is found by the door.

Another Spielberg's movie, "E.T.", inspired "Yomo" yogurt producer to respond "Danone"'s campaign by featuring a lizard-man alien losing time because he tries to taste a yogurt held by an unwilling witness till "it" is left back by its own spaceship (which can be seen taking over behind the trees, very much like the movie scene): "you lost the interplanetary coach" says the man (well-known Italian comic actor Beppe Grillo, who gained the 1986 "Advertising & Success" award because of that commercial ad).

### THE ZENITH EXAMPLE

An advertising campaign for "Zenith" watches in 1980 used "typical" UFO sighting photo scenes accompanied by apocalyptic statements on the line: "perfect 'Zenith' technology would interest even advanced ET visitors". In 1981 a second "Zenith" campaign featured UFOs beaming down on witnesses' watches, and two TV commercials where such watches were even made to "disappear". We managed to obtain a lengthy report by their PR agency copywriter on how they got the idea and why they used UFOs as a vehicle for the commercial.

### A MESSAGE?

UFO sightings or images were also used for "Peugeot" motorcars, "Philips" TV sets, "Pioneer" Compact Discs, "Texas" pocket calculators, "Sony" video-recorders and even for a "Bidone Aspiratutto" vacuum-cleaner (which is activated by a UFO in order to suck everything from a kitchen and be sucked by the UFO!).

It is difficult to understand whether by seeing and talking about UFOs/aliens the effect would be that UFOs (even if not believed or laughed at) come to be "ordinary" things: indeed UFO sightings are presently no longer extraordinary for the public: they are trivial. Is this the reason why they are less seen in the sky and more in the media? And when UFO sightings become more numerous, is it because of more frequent advertising or do such advertisings follow waves of sightings?

We don't know, but the mythological component surely exists, and the symbolic message is: "we are not alone".

## 1986 CASES HISTORIES

Short summaries are taken from investigation reports by C.I.S.U. members of some recent Italian UFO/IFO sightings, with the aim of informing about what's going on. Not all such case histories have already been evaluated.

### MOVING LIGHTS IN PIEMONTE

Investigator: Paolo Toselli

At 1 a.m. on May 30th, 1986, a 35 years-old bar owner in MOMBERCELLI (province of Asti) and his wife saw through a window a faint red light moving in the sky: more precisely it went to and fro covering an arc of 40° in two seconds, at less than 10° above the ESE horizon. The witness tried to video-record the light with his cam-corder, but the light was not even visible through the camera, though it was still visible with naked eye for about 10-15 minutes; then he got inside and looked at his videotape, but only streetlamps were recognizable on the recording. The light was still there when they decided to go to bed. Several other people witnessed the same phenomenon over a vast area in the Asti and Alessandria provinces: a white light was seen circling over ACQUI TERME (AL) and OVADA (AL), and a woman in CANTALUPO (AL) even called the police, but the cops arrived too late.

### LUMINOUS CONE IN THE MESTRE SKY

Investigator: Francesco Fasolo

Just after 11 p.m. on May 21st, 1986 two different groups of people in MESTRE (province of Venezia) watched independently a half-conical bright object passing in the sky. Restaurant owner Matteo Z., his brother and a police patrol were all outside the restaurant when they watched for 15 seconds a white-orange light followed by a trail and jumping along a horizontal path as fast as a plane. From its smaller part its light was brighter and a reddish spot was visible, while a yellow-orange halo surrounded the opposite side.

At the same time, Mrs. Elena F. was on her home terrace a few hundreds meters away when she saw a light against the overcast sky and called her daughter: they both watched a half-conical object identical to the one described by Matteo Z., changing colors as if rotating on itself. The SSW-NE direction of flight was identical in both sightings.

### "ABDUCTION" NEAR BELLUNO

Investigator: Antonio Chiumiento

At 11 p.m. on August 15th, 1986 a 42 years old professional and his wife (a teacher aged 37) holidaying in CALALZO DI CADORE (province Belluno) were sitting near a wood outside the town when they noticed a bright light coming down from the sky, soon becoming a disc-shaped, domed object, blue in color and luminescent. They saw it land, then their memories stopped and they found themselves there again two hours later, at 1 a.m.: the object had disappeared and only a dark circular trace was visible on the ground, where grass was bent and blackened for a diameter of 9 meters.

Strange dreams and difficulties at sleeping on the following nights, as well as the surfacing memory of seeing two human-like beings with a overall, helped to persuade them to be hypnotized on August 23-24 by a Pordenone M.D. They so recalled that two beings came out of the disc and took them on board without touching them but simply "communicating" them such intention. Inside they were laid down and underwent a "medical examination", no detail of which was possible to

obtain even under hypnosis. The entities were 2 meters tall, wearing a overall which didn't covered their long, oval-shaped heads with phosphorescent eyes, pointed ears and a narrow mouth. Inside the craft strange devices were seen and the whole "room" was illuminated by several lights of various colors.

#### 1986 OVERVIEW

The number of 1986 UFO/IFO Italian sightings filed by C.I.S.U. was 143 as of May 20, 1987: that is they were less than half the number of the 1985 wave.

From a monthly distribution you find that the first four months were "poorer" (5 reports each or less), while since late May the number of reports rose up and remained between 10 and 20 each month up to December.

Regional distribution was more scattered: some regions had no report at all, while other were very "rich"; generally speaking, more reports came from the Northern regions (94) and less from the Central (40), with only very few ones from the South (9), this being due perhaps to the unbalanced distribution of C.I.S.U. members, more numerous in the Northern and Central areas.

A brief look for report patterns: in January through April only Nocturnal Lights in the North; late May and early June saw the "Milan flap": formations of manoeuvring lights seen by thousands of people for several nights, nearly all due to searchlights. In June there happened the first sightings in the Central regions (Umbria and Marche), while in July UFO activity centered in the Northeastern provinces, especially on the Veneto coastline, where bright lights were often reported hovering, entering or leaving the sea. Also in July, the "Brescia flap" occurred, with one or more CE-III's in and around Rudiano (see ITUFOR-3). What is unusual, no report was collected in the first half of August, but after the "abduction" of a couple near Belluno on August 15th (see elsewhere in this issue) several reports arrived from all the Northeast, some of them referring to dark objects seen in full daylight. Between August and September sightings migrated to the Central regions, particularly in Lazio (due to the launch of C.I.S.U. UFO hot-line in Rome): more Daylight Discs and Close Encounters were reported. In October and November nearly all reports were from Central regions: Toscana, Umbria and Marche, and a greater number of these were low-level objects. No clear pattern was distinguishable in December.

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#### CONGRESS AT LYON Meeting with the French ufology by Edoardo Russo

(A detailed report is offered of the First Lyon UFO Meeting, held by A.E.S.V. in France on April 8-10, 1987. Researchers from five countries attended: Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland. Several interesting papers were presented, notably "UFology and Occultism: Some Similarity" (Claude Maugé), "Promises and Limits of Project UNICAT" (Jacques Scornaux), "SOS-OVNI UFO Hotline and Minitel Computer Network" (Perry Petrakis), "Thinking of the Unidentified" (Anne Veve), "UFO and Informatics" (Denys Breysse), "IFOs: One or More Realities?" (Michel Bougard). A brief overview of present French UFO scene is also given. We hereby present the abstract of the only Italian paper, by Paolo Toselli)

## **"IMAGINE THAT YOU SEE A UFO": ANALYSIS OF THE STEREOTYPE**

by Paolo Toselli

In order to acquire information about the UFO stereotype (defined as the common mental "imagerie" of UFOs made up of knowledge, beliefs and prejudices), a series of experiments were conducted in the primary and secondary schools (children aged 9-14) in Alessandria between 1979 and 1982.

Boys and girls were asked to imagine they had seen a UFO, and to freely describe and draw what they had seen. After they did so, a questionnaire was distributed to determine prior UFO knowledge/interest. 400 stories were collected, and the analysis is still in progress. As for the 128 ones from secondary school (age between 11 and 14), as many as 40% of them referred to a CE-III sighting and another 15% to CE-IV (abductions).

Children's descriptions were not much influenced by Spielberg "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" movie (seen by 43%) nor by "Project UFO" TV serial (seen by 70%). A sometime striking resemblance is noted with real UFO events: 84% of imaginary CE-III's took place in the evening/night, in an isolated place or just near home; the "witness" was alone in the 85% of cases; only one entity was sighted in 39%, and entity shape was "humanoid" in 50% of instances. In the abduction stories the typical arrival of the UFO was: a "blinding" light and a strange sound before the object appears.

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## **THE GHOST-ROCKETS OF 1946**

Swedish Defense Files Opened to Ufologists

by Anders Liljegren

(Translation of an article originally published in "A.F.U. Newsletter" No. 28, December 1985; we hereby offer an English abstract only of the editorial box by Edoardo Russo about Italian reports from that year.)

## **THE GHOST-ROCKETS IN ITALY**

A large echo of the Scandinavian ghost-rockets is to be found in the 1946 Italian press, and Italian sightings also took place. A research in 14 daily newspapers collected 70 newsclippings between July and October 1946. In that first after-war year, Italian dailies only had two pages, and most of the news were just brief "flashes" a few lines long.

As for the Italian reports, we note: "strange bolides" at Imola (BO) and "rocket projectiles" in Bologna on September 17, "flying bombs" over Vercelli and a "fire bolide" again at Imola on the 18th, "luminous bolides" at Turin on the 19th, at Florence on the 21st and on the 22nd, "bright signals" over Rome on the 20th, more "rocket projectiles" at Livorno on September 20 and in Bari on October 5, "flying bolides" in Trieste on October 12 and even a "fire disc" at Varazze (SV) on October 4.

In all, 20 Italian reports are in C.I.S.U. files, 17 from September and 3 from October, 1946; most of them referred to bright, fast-moving, trailed objects in the night sky, which were at first connected to the Scandinavian ghost-rockets by the press, and were later explained away as fireballs by astronomers.

## WHO'S WHO IN ITALIAN UFOLOGY

We go on with our usual presentations of Italian ufologists.

Maurizio Verga lives in Cermenate and works as a textile technician. He has been involved in ufology since 1977, his main interest being the systematic collection of Italian close encounter reports, in Italy, an argument he is the undisputed national expert, since he have built over the years an impressive, comprehensive file and catalogue of more than 400 such events: "ITA-CAT" (now also in a computerized version). In recent years his interest has focused onto CE-II's with ground traces, and has edited a complete catalogue of 180 Italian cases ("TRA-CAT", first published in 1982 and recently released by C.I.S.U. in its third edition). It was the trace-reports to lead him to developed a very critical attitude towards such kind of evidence and its handling by ufologists.

A prolific writer, his articles have been published in several UFO journals in Italy and mostly abroad (Flying Saucer Review, Lumières dans la nuit, Inforespace, Ovni présence, Magonia, BUFORA Journal, Journal of Transient Aerial Phenomena, MUFON UFO Journal, UFO Sverige).

Since 1985 he's been coordinating the Italian "Computer UFO Network" (Rete Ufologica Computerizzata, R.U.C.) which groups together ufologists owning a personal computer in doing common activities of data inputting and text processing; he edits the network bulletin and also the only existing publication on computer applications to ufology, the "Computer UFO Newsletter" (in English). He recently contributed two chapters (on ground traces and computers, of course) to the collective book "UFOs: 1947-1987", edited by Hilary Evans.

A former member of Centro Ufologico Nazionale (C.U.N.), he was a founding member of Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici (C.I.S.U.), and he serves as a Council member. Several interviews have been published in the last two years about his computer work in the Italian press.

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All abstracts and translations by Edoardo Russo

### NEXT ISSUE

ITUFOR-6 will consist of the English abstracts of "UFO - RIVISTA DI INFORMAZIONE UFOLOGICA" No. 4, published in December 1987. It will also report on the International Congress held in Turin on June 20-21, the First "National UFO Information Week" (June 20-28) and the Italian Gallup Poll on UFOs (done on behalf of C.I.S.U.!!)

### SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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